

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

/053 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:BROSHCO:BJM

APPROVED BY PA/M:WDYESS

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P 292301Z JUL 75 ZFF4

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FROM PA - JOHN REINHARDT, CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A - DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT

TAGS: PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: HARRIS SURVEY FINDS PUBLIC OPPOSES MILITARY

SUPPORT FOR SOUTH KOREA

1. ACCORDING TO THE HARRIS SURVEY, BETWEEN MAY AND JULY
ENOUGH OF THE PUBLIC HAS TURNED AROUND ON THE QUESTION OF
MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SOUTH KOREA TO PRODUCE A 46 TO 39

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PERCENT PLURALITY AGAINST USING AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES
TO HELP DEFEND SOUTH KOREA. LAST MAY, IN CONTRAST, A 43
TO 37 PERCENT PLURALITY FAVORED USING AMERICAN FORCES IN
SUCH AN EFFORT. BOTH RESULTS WILL BE RELEASED TO THE

PRESS ON THURSDAY, JULY 31.

2. INTERESTINGLY, THE PROSPECT THAT TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS MIGHT BE USED IN SOUTH KOREA'S DEFENSE--SOMETHING THE PRESIDENT REFUSED TO RULE OUT IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE-- FURTHER REDUCES PUBLIC WILLINGNESS TO EMPLOY AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES IN THE EVENT OF AGGRESSION BY THE DPRK. THERE WAS 52 TO 32 PERCENT OPPOSITION TO USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, EVEN "IF THIS WERE THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE A SHORT WAR AND TO PREVENT ANOTHER VIETNAM."

3. THE HARRIS QUESTION ON SOUTH KOREA, REPEATED IN MAY AND JULY, WAS QUITE EXPLICIT IN DETAILING THE NATURE OF

THE PRESENT AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO SOUTH KOREA. IT READ: "THE U.S. HAS 36,000 TROOPS AND AIRMEN IN SOUTH KOREA. IF NORTH KOREA INVADED SOUTH KOREA, WE HAVE A FIRM COMMITMENT TO DEFEND SOUTH KOREA WITH OUR OWN MILITARY FORCES. IF SOUTH KOREA WERE INVADED BY COMMUNIST NORTH KOREA, WOULD YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE U.S. USING TROOPS, AIR POWER, AND NAVAL POWER TO DEFEND SOUTH KOREA?"

4. THE RESPONSES WERE:

	JULY	MAY
FAVOR	39	43
OPPOSE	46	37
NOT SURE	15	20

5. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE NUMBER WHO WERE UN-DECIDED HAS DECLINED DURING THE PERIOD THAT OPPOSITION HAS INCREASED. THIS SUPPORTS THE INFERENCE THAT MOST WAVERERS HAVE COME DOWN AGAINST SUPPORTING THE COMMITMENT TO SOUTH KOREA.

6. PROBING FOR THE REASONS BEHIND THE TURNAROUND OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE LAST TWO MONTHS, THE HARRIS SURVEY NOTES THERE ARE "NOT ONLY DEEP APPREHENSIONS OVER THE USE OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT ALSO CONTINUING DOUBTS ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF THE RULING GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH KOREA."

7. ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS AGREED THAT SINCE SOUTH KOREA IS A DICTATORSHIP AND CORRUPT, IT IS WRONG TO SUPPORT SUCH A GOVERNMENT; ROUGHLY 30 PERCENT DISAGREED (WHETHER WITH THE DICTATORSHIP AND CORRUPTION, OR WITH THE OBLIGATION NOT TO SUPPORT SUCH GOVERNMENTS, CANNOT BE DISTINGUISHED); AND ROUGHLY 30 PERCENT EXPRESSED NO OPINION ON THESE ISSUES.

8. ONLY 29 PERCENT AGREED WHILE 43 PERCENT DISAGREED (28 PERCENT SAID THEY WERE NOT SURE) WHEN ASKED TO EXPRESS A VIEW ON THE PROPOSITION THAT: "IF SOUTH KOREA FALLS TO THE COMMUNISTS, ALL OF ASIA, INCLUDING JAPAN, WILL GO COMMUNIST."

9. ALTHOUGH ONE MAY ENTERTAIN DOUBTS ABOUT THE DEPTH OF THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EITHER NORTH OR SOUTH KOREA, THE EXPRESSED DISTASTE FOR THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT ECHOS FINDINGS REPORTED LAST MARCH BY THE MINNESOTA POLL'S STATE-WIDE SURVEY ON FEELINGS TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM. AT THAT TIME, THE REASONS GIVEN FOR PREFERING TO OPT OUT OF SOUTH

VIETNAM INCLUDED THE FEELING THAT SUFFICIENT AID HAD BEEN RENDERED, THUS REMOVING THE OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FURTHER SUPPORT; THE NEED TO COPE WITH PRESSING AMERICAN PROBLEMS; THE CORRUPTION AND INEFFICACY OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT.

10. THE NEW ELEMENT ADDED TO THE ISSUE OF WHETHER TO SUPPORT SOUTH KOREA MAY BE THE RECENTLY RAISED QUESTION OF TACTICAL USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WHILE THIS MAY DETER AGGRESSION, IT MAY ALSO HAVE THE UNANTICIPATED EFFECT OF REDUCING PUBLIC WILLINGNESS TO RESIST AGGRESSION BECAUSE OF THE FEAR NUCLEAR WEAPONS MIGHT BE USED.

11. WE KNOW THAT THE ROPER SURVEY IS CURRENTLY ASKING
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A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE DEFENSE OF SOUTH KOREA. WE WILL REPORT ITS FINDINGS AS SOON AS THEY ARE AVAILABLE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, TOSEC, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE178984
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PA/M:BROSHCO:BJM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750261-0994
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197507107/baaaaqpe.tel
Line Count: 148
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 APR 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, KS, US
To: SECRETARY INFO SEOUL
TAIPEI
TOKYO
NATO
PEKING
MOSCOW

CINCPAC

Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006